



An ambitious day college in London for young people aged 16-25 with complex autism

Prospectus



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Viv Berkeley
Principal,
Ambitious College



Thank you for your interest in Ambitious College, London's first registered specialist day college. The college opened in September 2014 and is dedicated to supporting young people with autism, aged 16–25.

At Ambitious College we offer young people specialist education and support and provide the vocational and community-based opportunities they need to make a successful transition to an active life in their community.

We are a co-located college and have two campuses: our north London campus, the Pears Campus in the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London and our west London campus, the Pears Campus in West Thames College, Isleworth. This co-located approach enables us to extend our curriculum significantly and offer learners a wide range of mainstream vocational learning, social opportunities and work experience.

It is difficult to comprehend but as I write these words fewer than one in four young people with autism access any form of education beyond school. Not because they lack the ability or desire to learn; but because they are being held back by a system that lacks the knowledge and expertise to support them. Simply put, this is not good enough.

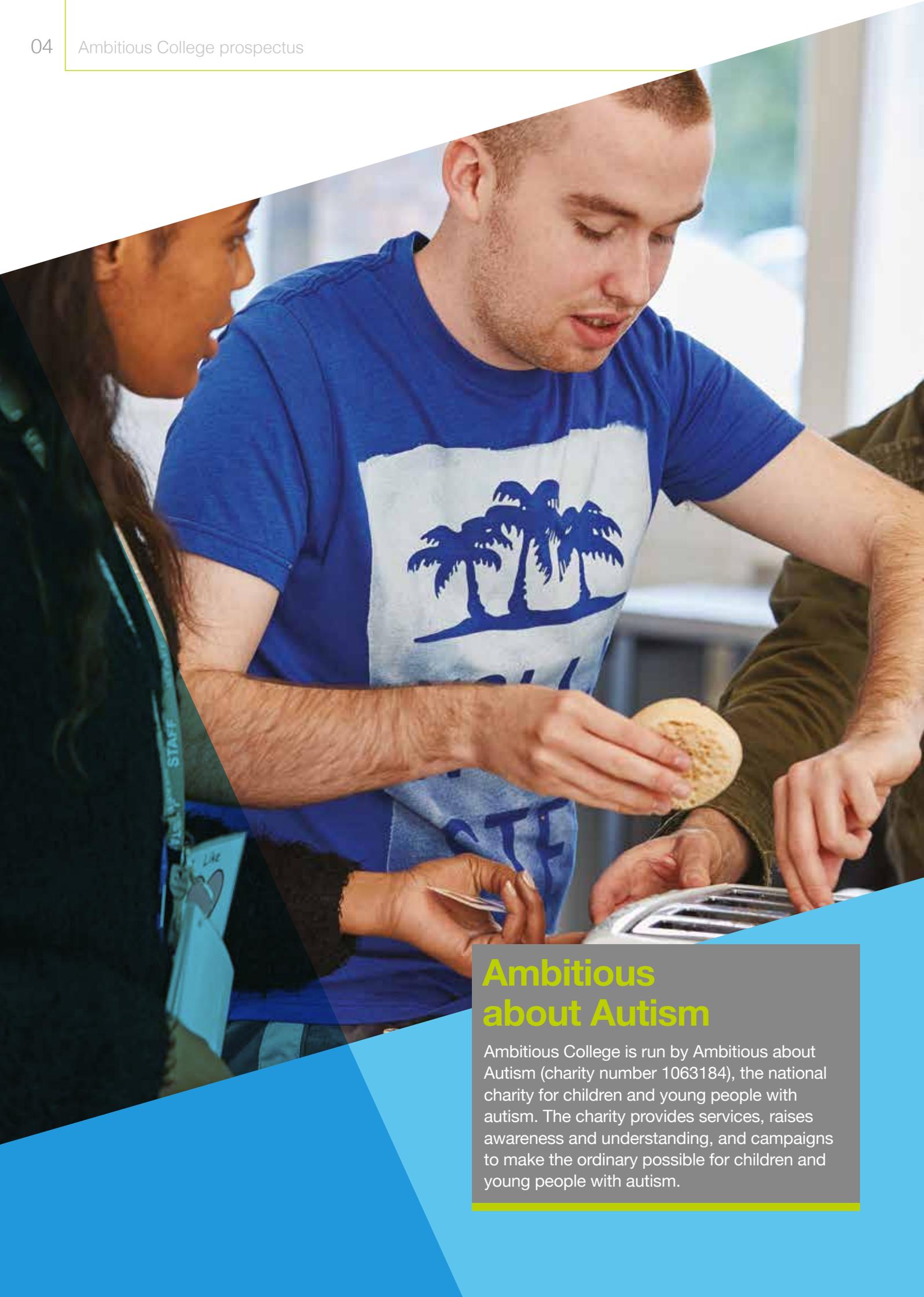
At Ambitious College we think everyone should be entitled to lead a fulfilling, happy and rewarding life and this must include young people with autism.

Our learners are at the heart of everything we do and their curriculum is highly personalised to help them achieve their goals. It is delivered by our very skilled and friendly staff. We offer lots of opportunities to learn in the community through a range of partnerships with local employers, services and our mainstream college partners.

As our name suggests, we are ambitious for our learners. We are a dedicated team of professionals who are passionate about our work supporting young people to live happy and fulfilling lives in their home community. We know that with the right opportunity and support they can achieve their potential.

I really do hope you choose Ambitious College and look forward to working with you and your son or daughter in the very near future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Viv Berkeley". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned in the bottom right corner of the page.



Ambitious about Autism

Ambitious College is run by Ambitious about Autism (charity number 1063184), the national charity for children and young people with autism. The charity provides services, raises awareness and understanding, and campaigns to make the ordinary possible for children and young people with autism.

Thank you

Ambitious College is central to our Ambitious Futures Appeal. We're grateful to the very generous donations of Pears Foundation, The Garfield Weston Foundation and other donors, who made Ambitious College possible.

pears
foundation



If you're interested in finding out more about the Ambitious Futures Appeal, please contact John Trampleasure, jtrampleasure@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk or call 020 8815 5160.

The success of our co-located approach depends on strong partnerships with our host providers. We thank them for their support.

College of Haringey,
Enfield and North
East London



West Thames College
London, Isleworth Campus



Our co-located model

We are aspirational and ambitious for our learners and believe that many of them, with the right support, can access a mainstream setting. For this reason we have co-located our campuses with mainstream general further education colleges. This enables us to extend our curriculum significantly and offer learners a wide range of mainstream vocational learning, social opportunities and work experience.

In north London our co-located partner is the College of North East London and in west London we have partnered with West Thames College.

Governance at Ambitious College

The Terms of Reference for the Governing Body are approved by the Ambitious about Autism Board of Trustees. The nine strong governors consist of volunteers who are drawn from the Board of Trustees, the college staff team, the community, and key external stakeholders.

The Governing Body's role is to support the Board of Trustees in ensuring effective oversight of Ambitious College through the scrutiny and monitoring of agreed specific responsibilities.

To find out more about governance at Ambitious College, please visit our website ambitiouscollege.org.uk.

Safeguarding and PREVENT

All staff at Ambitious College have a responsibility for the safeguarding and wellbeing of our learners.

We take our responsibility for safeguarding young people and adults at risk seriously. We have designated safeguarding leads and robust practices in place to ensure learner safety.

Our safeguarding policies and our PREVENT policy can be found on the college website.

The designated lead for Safeguarding in the college is the College Principal and this authority is delegated to each of the Vice Principals in each of the college campuses.

Learner and family engagement

We know that helping our learners achieve their goals is all about us working together in partnership. That's why we provide a learner and family engagement service, working with parents, students and other professionals to support with transition into college, progression through college and into adult life.



Our admissions process

Visit and Tour events

Before applying for a place at Ambitious College we recommend that you attend one of the college's Visit and Tour events.

Dates for the events and details about how to sign up for a tour can be found at the college website ambitiouscollege.org.uk.

For the academic year 17/18 the following dates have been confirmed:

All tours start promptly at 10.30am-12pm

Ambitious College, Pears Campus at CONEL Tottenham

Tuesday	7	February	2017
Tuesday	14	March	2017
Thursday	27	April	2017
Tuesday	23	May	2017
Tuesday	4	June	2017

Ambitious College, Pears Campus at West Thames College, Isleworth

Monday	20	February	2017
Monday	13	March	2017
Monday	10	April	2017
Monday	8	May	2017

Professionals visit to Pears Campus, CONEL

Thursday	9	February	2017	2pm-3pm
Thursday	4	May	2017	11am-12pm

Professionals visits to Pears Campus, West Thames

Tuesday	7	February	2017	2pm-3pm
Tuesday	2	May	2017	3pm-4pm

Application

We strongly advise parents and carers that they make their local authority aware that they are considering Ambitious College.

For parents or carers who wish to pursue an application after they have attended a Visit and Tour event, we ask them to complete a parent pre-assessment form. We also ask that a professional's pre-assessment form is completed. Any additional supporting paperwork such as an Education, Health and Care Plan is also required.

When a local authority consults with us for a placement we follow the guidelines set out in the SEN Code of Practice.

Assessment

Our admissions panel, comprising of the Senior Leadership Team, will review all the associated paperwork and make a decision about whether we are able to meet the young person's needs. If the consensus is to proceed to assessment we endeavour to undertake two assessment visits – one at home and if the young person is attending school or another college, we will endeavour to visit them there also.



On completion of the assessment visit an assessment form is completed and brought to the weekly Admissions Meeting for a decision on offering a place. We inform parents of the outcome.

Our Admissions Policy is available to download from the college website ambitiouscollege.org.uk

Offer

The final decision about placements is made by the learner's home local authority and should take into account the preference expressed by the family and our assessment. Under the Children and Families Act 2014, a parent or learner can name a preferred college in an Education, Health and Care plan.

Transition

When the placement has been agreed we will work with the learner and their family to ensure a successful move from their current school or college to Ambitious College. Transition is a personalised process and requires careful planning and support. Our learners are funded by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and local authority, usually from education budgets with some input from social care and/or health as best meets their needs. Personal budgets can also be used to contribute to a placement at Ambitious College. Ambitious College was awarded Section 41 Secretary of State approved status in 2014 and gained EFA registration in January 2015. Registration means that we are contracted by the EFA to deliver education and training for learners with high needs, for local authorities that agree placements.

For more information on making a referral to us please contact our admissions team:

Telephone: 020 8815 5428

Email: admissions@ambitiouscollege.org.uk

Our transdisciplinary team approach

The staffing team in the college consists of a number of roles each with its own professional discipline. Putting the learner at the centre of the process, our staff work together across various disciplines, to deliver positive outcomes for our learners.

The staffing teams consist of:

- Qualified Teachers who plan and deliver the curriculum
- Speech and Language Therapists who support learners to develop their communication and social interaction skills
- Occupational Therapists who help learners to manage sensory issues and develop functional life skills
- Behavioural Analysts and Learning and Behaviour Specialists who work with learners to overcome behavioural issues which could create barriers to learning
- Employment specialist who supports learners to develop vocational skills and access work experience

Working as a transdisciplinary team we use Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) to help our learners acquire new skills and participate in everyday life. This approach helps our learners overcome patterns of challenging or socially isolating behaviours and gives them more opportunities to learn effectively and achieve long term goals.

Delivering the curriculum

The majority of our learners access college five days a week for 40 weeks of the year. The college day starts at 9.30am and ends at 4pm.

Where possible, learners will be supported in setting their own learning targets. These will always relate to the outcomes in the learners' Education, Health and Care plans (EHCP).

Functional skills such as communication, literacy, numeracy and ICT are developed and embedded throughout the entire curriculum. We support our learners to acquire these skills through 'doing' rather than in a more traditional classroom-based model, as we know that is how they learn best.

Where appropriate, we fully support learners to gain qualifications that will further their interests and help them achieve their goals. Ambitious College was awarded Centre Recognition status by OCN London, a national awarding organisation.



Our curriculum offer

Our study programmes **Employment**

We are here to support young people with autism to achieve the life they want. To do this we deliver personalised programmes of learning which follow the four pathways developed by Preparing for Adulthood:

- Employment
- Independent living
- Better health
- Friends, relationships and community

preparingforadulthood.org.uk



Independent living and housing

Preparing our young adults for life after college is a central principle of all we do with our learners. Much of our curriculum is delivered in the community through practical learning. We support learners to develop the skills they will need to live as independently as they can and make activities such as shopping, cooking and accessing leisure services an integral part of our curriculum offer.

Employment

Having a work aspiration is very important for many of our learners and their families. It gives our learners a sense of purpose. With this in mind, we put a strong emphasis on developing employability skills. For some of our learners this will mean working on communication, independence and participation skills. For others, the aim will be to develop skills specific to the job they want to do. All learners have the opportunity to undertake work experience. This increases their self-confidence and ability to cope in a range of settings outside the college. We employ a full time Employment Specialist and we are a member of the British Association of Supported Employment (BASE).

Friends, relationships and community

Communication and social understanding can be a challenge for many of our learners. However, we recognise that forming relationships is an essential part of community and family life and we support our learners to develop these vital skills at every opportunity. We operate a Total Communication Environment (TCE) and support the varying communication methods our learners use. This includes PECS, Makaton, visual supports, word recognition and the use of social stories.

Good health

We encourage our learners to be healthy in every way; mentally, physically and socially. We support them to form friendships, be ready to work with others and see different points of view. Within our PHSE curriculum we work with learners to develop skills and understanding around self-awareness and awareness of others.

Our community access programme supports learners to contextualise their learning around money management, travel training, healthy eating, staying fit, social behaviours, effective communication – to name just a few.

Case studies

Matthew

Matthew started at Ambitious College in September 2015. When he started at the college, Matthew didn't have any independent skills in using a communication aid to support him in making his needs known.

Our Speech and Language Therapist identified that Matthew would benefit from using an IT-based communication system. Working with the local NHS Communication Aid Centre the SaLT organised an assessment to identify if Matthew would benefit from using LAMP (Language Acquisition through Motor Planning) software loaded onto a tablet device.. The Centre agreed to fund this so Matthew now has a communication aid for life. When he leaves college he will continue to be supported by the centre if anything should go wrong or need updating.

Once the communication aid arrived at College the SaLT trained Matthew's team on how to programme it and made detailed communication passports so that everyone was aware of how to support Matthew.

Through using his device Matthew has made progress in increasing class time. He now can tell staff when he needs a break, water or the toilet. It provides him with the opportunities to make personal choices of his own, developing his skills so he can make more of his wants and needs known. For example, he has a 'tea' button and staff devised a tea making programme for him with a Chaining Sequence command. With this programme he has developed the skills to make his own cup of tea with very little or any support.

Family support has been vital in Matthew's progression as close liaison with and input from his mum has helped deliver his tasks at college. She encourages these at home as well so there is consistency for Matthew to achieve his goals and targets. Data recorded suggests that Matthew's self injurious behaviour has dramatically reduced or stopped; staff believe this could be due to him being able to communicate his wishes or requests when anxious or stressed via his new communication tool.

Stacy

Stacy started at Ambitious College in September 2015. Stacy participated in employability classes where she learned skills that would be useful for work experience.

Stacy was able to use all of her newfound skills when she worked at the Ambitious College Christmas market stall in Enfield. Following this experience, a placement became available at the RAF Museum. Stacy can find it difficult to transition to new places and often needs to visit somewhere two or three times before she gets out of the car. Stacy was, however, successful in leaving the car on her first visit to the museum and successfully completed a 7-week placement at the Museum.





Employment

Good health & wellbeing

Friends, relationships & community inclusion



Key contact information

Our North London Campus:
Pears Campus at CONEL
c/o College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London
Tottenham Green
Clyde Road
London N15 4RX
Tel 020 3870 8775
Email admin@ambitiouscollege.org.uk

Our West London Campus:
c/o West Thames College
London Road
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Web ambitiouscollege.org.uk

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